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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

BUILDING THE FUTURE

Together we have embarked on a journey to reform the United Nations and prepare it to meet the challenges of the next century. We are building on our strengths and creating a results-oriented, high performing organization that is flexible, responsive and ready to meet the ever-evolving needs of our Member States.

Our greatest strength - and the key to our success - is the quality of our people, both staff and managers. To capitalize on this strength, we need to create an organizational environment that supports managers and enables all staff to contribute to their maximum potential. To this end, we are undertaking a thorough review of the Organization's human resources management.

There is a clear need to move responsibility for the management of human resources to those directly accountable for programme delivery - the line managers. This will require forging new partnerships between the Office of Human Resources Management, department heads and line managers. Through our reform efforts, I aim to create a management culture that recognizes staff as the Organization's greatest resource and holds managers accountable for making the most effective use of this resource. Managing people must be seen as a key managerial task, along with managing programmes, financial resources, information and change. I therefore expect managers to communicate a clear sense of purpose and direction to their staff, to motivate them, build team spirit and trust, and manage performance to achieve results.

The new Performance Appraisal System provides an important tool to assist in managing performance through jointly setting goals, agreeing on expected results and engaging in ongoing dialogue about performance. The Performance Appraisal System also emphasizes the importance of professional development and learning by requiring all staff and managers to set development goals and holding managers accountable for developing their staff.

As you know, I see staff development as a responsibility shared by the Organization, by managers and by staff themselves. The Organization must provide a framework of opportunities and foster an environment conducive to

learning. I recognize that, in the past, the Organization has underinvested in developing its human resources. It is now time to recognize that building and maintaining the professional competence of staff is a critical investment in the Organization's future.

In the current biennial budget, I asked for and received an increase in funds for staff development and learning activities. We must use these funds to strengthen the Organization's technical and managerial capacity and to promote shared values and standards across the Organization. But development is not a one-time effort. Maintaining professional excellence and cutting-edge expertise is a continual process, in which managers and staff themselves have important roles to play.

I expect managers to keep themselves up to date, and to support their staff's development and career progress by providing on-the-job training, coaching and mentoring, and ensuring that staff are allowed and encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for learning and growth. Mandatory managerial development programmes have been put in place to assist managers in meeting the many challenges they face, and we will increasingly place emphasis on managerial ability when selecting staff for positions of leadership within the Organization. Expanded opportunities for learning and development are also being made available to staff at all levels. In this regard, the Organization will redouble its efforts to ensure that merit, productivity and achievement are rewarded by promotion and advancement at all levels. I therefore urge all staff to be proactive, flexible and mobile and to seek new challenges in their daily work in order to achieve organizational goals and, in so doing, to fulfil their individual aspirations.

The future of any organization depends on its ability to learn, grow and change as the world changes. The United Nations is no exception. I am joined by the Organization's senior officials in urging all staff and managers to demonstrate their commitment to professional excellence and continuous learning. In return, we commit ourselves to doing our part to promote a culture in the United Nations Secretariat where excellence and continuous learning are expected, valued and rewarded.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN
Secretary-General